

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 RSR-01

CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 IO-13 DPW-01 AID-20 PER-05 /108 W

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O 311100Z JUL 73 ZFF-6

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5166

SECDEF IMMEDIATE

CHAIRMAN JCS IMMEDIATE

INFO CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

DEPCHJUSMAGTHAI IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 5329

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MCAP, MASS, LA

SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF DAO IN VIENTIANE

1. IN VIEW OF IMMINENCE OF CONCLUSION LAO NEGOTIATIONS, I BROACHED WITH SOUVANNA THIS MORNING, JULY 31, QUESTION OF ESTABLISHING A DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE IN VIENTIANE. I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS YET FROM WASHINGTON TO RAISE THIS MATTER WITH HIM FORMALLY BUT THAT I SOUGHT HIS REACTION TO THE WAY WE PLANNED TO RESTRUCTURE US MILITARY PRESENCE IN LAOS. I SAID THAT WE WANTED A BRIGADIER GENERAL TO HEAD THE DEFENSE ATTACHE'S OFFICE SO THAT HE COULD ALSO COMMAND LOGISTICS SUPPORT TEAM PRESENTLY OPERATING IN UDORN. I STRESSED THAT THE DEFENSE ATTACHE WOULD BE THE SENIOR MILITARY ADVISER TO THE AMBASSADOR IN VIENTIANE AND THAT THE RESTRUCTURING OF OUR MILITARY EFFORT HERE WAS MOTIVATED BY OUR DESIRE TO COMPLY WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE VARIOUS AGREEMENTS ON LAOS. I POINTED OUT THAT IN THE DISCUSSIONS LEADING TO THE GENEVA AGREEMENT OF 1962, ALL PARTIES HAD APPARENTLY AGREED TO EXEMPT THE MILITARY ATTACHE'S OFFICE FROM THE LIMITATIONS IMPOSED BY THE 1962 AGREEMENTS ON PERSONNEL CONCERNED WITH MILITARY MATTERS. I CONTINUED THAT THE MILITARY ATTACHE'S OFFICE WOULD GROUP ALL AMERICAN PERSONNEL

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WORKING DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY ON MILITARY MATTERS AND THAT

THERE WOULD BE NO AMERICANS WORKING ON MILITARY MATTERS ATTACHED TO OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE U.S. MISSION. THIS DEFENSE ATTACHE'S OFFICE WOULD CARRY OUT IN LAOS, IN ADDITION TO THE NORMAL ATTACHE FUNCTIONS, THE WORK INVOLVED IN CONNECTION WITH THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. I SAID THAT WE WERE THINKING IN TERMS OF 30 US MILITARY OFFICERS FOR THIS DAO AND THAT WE HOPED TO ACCREDIT ALL OF THEM IF POSSIBLE.

2. SOUVANNA REPLIED THAT "IT WAS ONE MINUTE BEFORE TWELVE," THEREBY INDICATING THAT LAO NEGOTIATIONS WOULD SOON BE COMPLETED. HE STRESSED THAT ONCE PROTOCOL HAS BEEN SIGNED IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE SUCH MAJOR CHANGES IN THE AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN LAOS AND THEREFORE CONCLUDED IF CHANGE IS TO BE MADE, IT MUST BE DONE WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS. HE SAID THAT HE HAS NO OBJECTIONS TO THE DAO BEING HEADED BY A GENERAL OFFICER IF THIS WAS REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN THE UNITY OF COMMAND OVER THE PERSONNEL WORKING OUTSIDE OF LAOS IN SUPPORT OF THE US MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO LAOS. AS FOR ACCREDITING 30 MILITARY OFFICERS ON THE DIPLOMATIC LIST, HE THOUGHT THIS WAS TOO HIGH. HE POINTED OUT THAT US ALREADY HAS A NUMBER OF MILITARY ATTACHES ON THE DIPLOMATIC LIST (WE HAVE EIGHT) AND THE REST OF THE DAO WOULD MERELY HAVE THEIR NAMES SUBMITTED TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE INDICATING THAT THEY ARE PART OF THE DAO.

3. COMMENT: SINCE DECEMBER 7, 1972, WHEN WE FIRST RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DAO IN VIENTIANE, WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO GET CLEAR GUIDANCE OUT OF WASHINGTON. ON EIGHT OCCASIONS SINCE LAST DECEMBER (AND I WILL SPARE DEPARTMENT LISTING ALL REFERENCES) WE HAVE STRESSED THE URGENCY OF GETTING A WASHINGTON DECISION PRIOR TO THE FORMATION OF A NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT. WITH SOUPHANOUVONG BECOMING MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, I THINK WE MUST ASSUME THAT THE NEXT GOVERNMENT WILL NOT BE SYMPATHETIC TO OUR REQUEST FOR ACCREDITING A LARGE NEW DAO. ON THE OTHER HAND, I HAVE JUST HEARD FROM THE PRIME MINISTER THAT AS A RESULT OF MY URGING, HE IS PLANNING TO APPOINT SISOUK AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE IN THE NEXT GOVERNMENT. LATTER WOULD BE A MOST FORTUNATE DEVELOPMENT AND SHOULD FACILITATE OUR WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH FAR AFTER NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN FORMED.

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4. I RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZE ME TO WRITE THE PRIME MINISTER SOONEST, INFORMING HIM THAT WE PLAN TO ESTABLISH A DAO THIS WEEK IN VIENTIANE AND THAT THIS OFFICE WOULD BE HEADED BY A BRIGADIER GENERAL WHO WOULD HAVE A TOTAL STAFF OF 30 MILITARY OFFICERS IN ADDITION TO SOME CIVILIANS. I WOULD ASK PRIME MINISTER TO ACKNOWLEDGE THIS LETTER WHICH EXCHANGE WOULD CONSTITUTE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT.

5. I BELIEVE THAT THE PRECISE MAKEUP OF THE DAO (HOW MANY SSO OFFICERS, HOW MANY LOGISTICS OFFICERS, WHAT RANKS, ETC.) AS WELL AS THE TOR FOR THE DAO CAN BE WORKED OUT LATER. I AM SURE THAT AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE WILL ALSO WANT TO HAVE HIS SAY IN DETERMINING THE KIND OF STAFF HE WANTS IN THE DAO. IN THE MEAN-TIME, THE CLOCK IS TICKING AWAY AND IF WE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT ESTABLISHING A SINGLE MANAGERIAL TYPE MILITARY ORGANIZATION IN VIENTIANE WITH ABRIGADIER GENERAL AT THE HELM, WHO HAS ALSO CONTROL OVER THE SUPPORTING LOGISTICS ELEMENTS IN UDORN, WE MUST ACT WITHIN NEXT 72 HOURS AT THE LATEST.

DEAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 JUL 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973VIENTI05329
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS DEAN
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973071/aaaaaack.tel
Line Count: 127
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02-Oct-2001 by elyme>; APPROVED <20-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ESTABLISHMENT OF DAO IN VIENTIANE
TAGS: MCAP, MASS, LA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005